
Title: Inu the Crone's Journal

Author: Inu the Crone.

(*Excerpted*)

Darn pesky Britanni-ans,
they waltz into my
humble abode, upset the
balance of the house,
track sand in on their
dirty shoes and then they
didn't take off at the
door (the first time!). I
don't know who brought
them up but they need a
little respect and a good
dose of manners. Some
of them claimed they
actually ride their filthy
beasts in their own
houses as well! My
goodness, what the world
is coming to these days.
Their so-called "mage" in
the blue robe seemed a
little stiff, but he took
insults in good humour,
which is to his credit. He
wanted me to translate a
journal for them. It was
apparently written by
someone called Dupre...
they didn't tell me who
he was, but he seemed to
be important to them. At
least he knew how to
read and write. Clainin's
scribble in the margins
seems to indicate he has
a good grasp on
translating separate word
forms, but he has no
idea of the flow of our
language. Symbols have
different meanings
depending on what symbols
are around them. If I
could stand having him
around for a few months
it wouldn't take long to
improve Clainin's

understanding, if he is as intelligent as these mages purport to be. My people would not approve, of course, but then they have not "approved" of me for some years now so that's no great loss. If we are to be neighbours with these people they will need to be integrated into the traditions and society we hold dear, or we will lose it in the rush of "progress" they bring with them.

I set them tasks, which even the best of my family could not accomplish. I wanted to send them away so I could get back to my contemplation. The desert is usually so quiet and tranquil; the heat is testing to the concentration. This is why I am here. I expected the Britannians to perish at the hands of the fan dancers when I sent them to free the spirits of my slain nephews. My foolish nephews did perish after all and they were among the best of the Samurai graduates in their year. Perhaps these strangers with their strange ways do have something to offer our people.

They returned in good time, claiming they had defeated the demons that held the souls of my nephews in thrall. I looked for the imbalance of their spirits as I have oft done since they were foolish enough to challenge the fan dancers – specialists and mistresses of their craft in the same way my nephews

were in theirs. Numbers
of course were against
them, yet those demons
held them back from
their continuation into the
afterlife. I know the gods
were angry at this
imbalance and punished me
for not stopping them by
cursing me with knowing
of their continued
existence and their
sadness as disturbances in
the balance of the
universe. Yet when I
sought their imbalances,
they were no longer
there. These Britannians
had completed this task.

Pesky foreigners; I needed
to find them another
task to get them out of
my home.

I remembered a legend of
my childhood, when the
lands now called the
blighted forests were
clear and fresh. Children
played among the cherry
blossoms, a small
community of farmers
were growing a crop
around the trees as they
did when my grandmother
was young. That was
before they upset the
spirits by refusing to
sacrifice the right amount
of their crop. It has
been a bad year that
year and the families
were starving. This always
makes such decisions
difficult. The leaders
chose to lessen the
sacrifice rather than
humble themselves and go
to Zento for help. The
city was always reluctant
to help the frontier
settlements; they would
always buy the produce
but never really offer
enough for the poor to
feed their families. Of
course, I didn't bother
telling the Britannians

this entire story. They do not act like a people who have such an interest in long tales, or enough respect for tradition to know why I was telling it. Such impatience I have not seen in adults of their age.

The gods were displeased that they did not keep to the sacrifice and sent the Kami of Drought to deal with them. The crops failed and the monster attacked remorselessly, day after day. My great grandmother fought with the men of the town to try and save them, while the older children hid the younger ones at a distance. It is a truly terrible spirit. No sacrifice was enough to sate its unending thirst. The older children finally realised the adults were not going to return. My grandmother, then a child of ten summers, led the remaining children to the city of Zento. Many of them took up the Bushido or Ninjitsu and tried to free their homeland, to no avail. I sent these foreigners to avenge my ancestors and set this right. I never had the ability to do so myself, my gifts were always in knowing the intentions of the spirit world.

Again they returned after a time, claiming that they had killed the spirit! Is there no end to what these people are capable of? I am certain I could send them against any threat and they would turn out triumphant, IF they could learn to listen respectfully and leave their shoes at the door.

I told their illiterate
mage I would translate
his journal. I also told
them to leave me alone
to complete it for them.
This Dupre, if it is his
writing, has an imperfect
understanding of grammar
himself... this is going to
take some time.